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the spread of its operations into every country in the world. Dr. Washington Gladden was elected president, succeeding Bishop Francis J. McConnell; Atlantic City was selected for the place of meeting in 1918. The addresses of this convention, practically all of which were of an unusual degree of interest and value, are to be published in the

magazine *Religious Education*. The customary Declaration of Principles expresses belief in a new and better social order based on confidence, good-will, and the spirit of service and co-operation, recognizing the will of God in the life and destiny of man and training its citizens to become members of an enduring friendship.

CHURCH EFFICIENCY

The Y.M.C.A. and the Soldiers

The Y.M.C.A. in the United States proposes to spend \$3,000,000 and to support five hundred men in the effort to render assistance to the soldiers who are to train themselves for military and naval service. The general plan of the Association is as follows: It is proposed that in every city and town where there is an Association there shall be organized a local Army and Naval Committee. Lists are rapidly being prepared of the Y.M.C.A. men, church members, and key-men in each regiment from which a nucleus will be formed for the work within each camp. Lists are being prepared of the names of available volunteers from which five hundred trained men may be chosen. At the present practically all Y.M.C.A. buildings have been thrown open to the troops. The uniform serves in lieu of a membership card. The permanent camps are to have, for each brigade, a wooden building of standard size, usually 40×100 feet and similar to those used on the Mexican border. In charge there will be a secretary, physical director, and moving-picture director with suitable equipment. The arrangements provide for religious services familiar to those acquainted with Y.M.C.A. work. The circuit services will be adapted for small groups of soldiers on guard duty. At larger centers the organization will become more elaborate. In connection with specifically religious work it is the policy of the Association to co-operate with the chaplain in charge. The

support which this heroic effort of the Y.M.C.A. is receiving is apparent from the response which was given the call in Chicago for \$150,000. At the present time something over \$183,000 has been provided for, and the City Park Commissioners have granted the use of Grant Park for military training. The students and faculty of the University of Chicago have contributed \$8,700, and Mr. Bickham, who has been in charge of the Y.M.C.A. work at the University of Chicago, has been chosen to organize the work of the Y.M.C.A. at Lake Bluff. The naval training station at Lake Bluff will be the largest training station in the world, comprising some twenty-one thousand men.

This work of the Y.M.C.A. is regarded as one of the important tasks which the war has thrust upon this country, inasmuch as it seeks to check the moral sagging that so frequently accompanies the soldiers' encampments and to guard against the vices that feed upon the army's vitals. The tremendous task which confronts those who seek to promote the religious and moral welfare of the soldiers commands the sympathy and support of all earnest folk. The recent exemption of the clergy from the President's draft measure bears testimony to the high importance with which the spiritual leadership of the people in time of stress is held. Major-General Bliss is quoted as saying: "I think that the work that is being done by the Association contributes more than any other single agency

to the contentment and good morals as well as good morale of the troops, and consequently to their good health." Major-General O'Ryan said: "If America goes to war, money can be turned over to the Y.M.C.A. with every confidence that it will be expended scientifically and along lines most acceptable to the soldiers."

Church Federation

An interesting illustration of a successful movement in church federation is to be found in a little pamphlet entitled, *The Federated Churches of Cleveland*, by Rev. E. R. Wright, executive secretary of the Federation of Churches of Cleveland. It is a résumé of the work of federation of five years. It is a really interesting and stimulating record of the power which churches can have when properly organized to bring the impact of their total force upon social and religious conditions. The experiment in Cleveland illustrates very clearly that church federation is rapidly ceasing to be an experiment and is becoming a fact.

Religious Attitudes and Church Efficiency

Ernest R. Groves has written a very suggestive article in the *American Journal of Sociology*, March, on the subject "An Unsocial Element in Religion." In this article the writer discusses two attitudes of religious life which issue in quite different kinds of action. He designates the one attitude with which he disapproves as narcotic. The other attitude, which he desires to foster, he speaks of as the moral engine of progress. He discusses these attitudes in their bearing upon oppressive inhibitions, the sense of limitation, disappointment, and sorrow and argues that the narcotic attitude regards religion as a refuge from the bitter facts of life. As he says of persons who adopt this attitude: "They look to religion for a removal of their keen sensitiveness to cruel fact, they drink into their souls a numbing spiritual potion as

other men for much the same purpose take physical poison . . . religion has for [these] defeated and distracted individuals the function that we know in these modern days belongs especially to neurosis." It is understood that the neurotic attitude accompanies other-worldliness and is productive of asceticism. There follows an interpretation of life which is morbid because of its indifference to the real facts of nature. He quotes Tolstoy as having said that there was a time in his experience when the aspiration of his whole being was to get out of life. It is worthy of consideration to note that the writer understands this narcotic attitude in religion to be alien to social service and to church efficiency. This is what he calls the unsocial element in religion. But the writer sees in religion something which is entirely different from this—namely, that social courage comes from the religious souls who get from their religion a love for the grapple with life, who attack that from which their sickly brother retreats. This approach is born of the effort to find spiritual enforcement, not to escape, but to face the defeats and setbacks of life. One's moral confidence depends upon the religious attitude one finds. Social progress comes from the religious attitude which provides a moral engine. The effort to promote church efficiency is the expression of this latter attitude in religion. As the writer says: "Modern life by a sense of the sanity of wholesome idealism seems more and more to be placing emphasis upon the productive type of religious experience."

Do the Rich Run the Churches?

It is charged often that the rich dominate the churches and that in this we find a great factor that makes for the inefficiency of the churches. In the *Watchman-Examiner*, April 26, Rev. Charles Stelzle discusses this briefly. He thinks this is a companion notion to the idea that the church stands for the present order of things, and that it is opposed to social and economic progress.

That the wealth of this country is owned by a comparatively small percentage of the people is generally known. Probably 1 per cent own 75 per cent of the wealth, while 70 per cent of the people own only 4 per cent of it. Along with this it is well to keep in mind that there are approximately forty millions of members in the churches of this country. The children who are too young to be members of the churches and the large number of friendly sympathizers who attend the services or assist the church would doubtless carry this number to seventy-five millions. Can it then be at all probable that the few who have great wealth are able to control this enormous company who are members or who are affiliated in some way with the church? The delegates to the great conventions and conferences of the churches are not dominated by the rich. That some legislation is occasionally passed that wealthy people can endorse does not mean necessarily that it is the product of their influence. When a poor man has qualifications that fit him for leadership in the church, he usually gets just as big a place as he can fill. The church is quick to use the man who is fit, just as is done in the commercial world.

The attitude of the Churches of Christ in America and of the individual national church bodies that compose this council is very clearly set forth in resolutions adopted by them in the interest of social and economic justice. They demand equal rights and complete justice for all men in all stations of life; the abatement and prevention of poverty; the conservation of health; a living wage for every industry, and the most equitable division in the production of industry that can be devised.

The churches are not supported by the rich mainly, but by men and women of small means. They are not maintained by the few large donations, conspicuous mention of which we see in the papers, but by the innumerable small offerings of the many.

Three delusions that relate to church efficiency should be corrected: that the church is run by the rich; that it stands for the present order of things; that it is supported primarily by the rich.

Factors Which Have to Do with the Decline of the Country Church

In the *American Journal of Sociology*, September, 1916, Anton T. Boisen gives a report of a special study of the country church made by him, covering five years and including five sections distributed in the states of Missouri, Tennessee, Kansas, New York, and Maine. About 12,000 persons are included in the study. Only those over fifteen years of age are considered. Church attendance is made the chief measure of interest in the church, but data are collected also on school training, financial standing, social activities, and other pertinent questions. We notice here only a few of the most striking facts and conclusions of this report.

The importance of the increase in tenancy as one of the chief causes of the decline in the interest in the church appears to be overemphasized generally. The influence of the church seems to vary inversely with the facilities for social intercourse outside of the church. The importance of the social factor must therefore be recognized. More than half of the men active in the church are also active in other organizations. Of those not active in the church, only 21 per cent are active in other organizations. The men upon whom the church has lost its hold are now, for the most part, outside of any organized social activity. So far, then, no other organization has taken the place of the church.

Church attendance was most general in the two sections in which the system of church management was least efficient. Apparently the influence of the country church is less where educational advancement is the greatest and where church management is most efficient. But in all of

these sections the better-educated classes were the most active in public affairs. Those of them who were engaged in social activity of any sort were also generally active in the church. Therefore the country church seems to be retaining its hold upon the more public-spirited and altruistic men of the community. The principal losses of the church were among those whose educational equipment was limited and whose social instincts were poorly developed. Among these no clearly defined reason could be given for not attending church. The reason was certainly not conscious skepticism, but generally indifference and disinclination, coupled often with moral laxity.

The most striking difference found in these five regions, and the factor that bears most directly upon the problem here considered, is the prevalent conception of religion. Where there was the least education, the conception of religion was "other-worldly" and church attendance was largest. While there existed along with this the social viewpoint, yet salvation was thought of chiefly as an escape from a future hell of fire and brimstone, and the church was looked upon as a mediator of a magical salvation rather than a generator of spiritual energy. Here also sectarianism was bitter and church federation very remote. Where education was the best and the socialized conception of religion was the most general, there was the least interest in the church. It would seem that in the process of liberalizing popular religious opinion the efficiency of the schools and of the churches themselves had worked, at least temporarily, to the disadvantage of the church. That the better-educated and the more public-spirited were still, for the most part, interested in the church, even if their numbers are not so great, constitutes a significant and hopeful fact. The old message of eternal punishment and a vicarious atonement had in it a powerful appeal. Cannot the hell of wrong habit, of diseased will, of misused

opportunity, and of guilty conscience be made just as real and just as vivid?

It should be kept in mind here that, while the facts set forth are illuminating and the conclusions of this study are of some value, the data upon which they are based are not sufficiently comprehensive to make them absolutely convincing.

Help in City Planning

The minister really cannot safely keep himself apart from the great movement in favor of the replanning of cities. The value of a "city plan" in the development of streets, parks, public buildings, zones, and transportation facilities is beyond question. Hundreds of cities are now considering the adopting of such plans. In view of this fact it is both practical and timely to develop other improvements which are dependent upon individual initiative and moral conviction. The city beautiful and the city efficient should become also the city filled with spiritual and social advance.

But such advance involves a program, and in this program are such essential matters as Americanization, child welfare, church co-operation, crime prevention, care of defectives and dependents, vocational guidance and education, civic music, city beautification, community housekeeping, housing, legal aid, public health, recreation, rural relations, social centers, social insurance, summer camps, unemployment. Recognizing this fact, the *Biblical World*, desirous of helping pastors who are concerned in aiding their communities, is establishing an informal department to which questions bearing upon this general subject can be addressed. This department will be under the general supervision of Rev. Myron E. Adams, who is already known as an expert in city planning. It might be added that Mr. Adams is just undertaking a program of city planning for Flint, Michigan. Questions should be addressed to him in care of the *Biblical World*.